

Notice of Appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215

Appellant Information:

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Objection to Record of Decision for Over-Snow Vehicle Use on Payette
National Forest USDA Forest Service, November 10, 2010

Payette National Forest Travel Management Plan

Deciding Officer: Suzanne Rainville, Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest

The specific portion of the decision that I am appealing is the northern boundary of the Lick Creek/Twenty Mile Closure. This area was modified and reduced after input from snowmobilers desiring access up and over from the Twenty Mile Lakes and Crestline Trail areas in to the Lick Creek Road corridor via the Duck Lake trailhead. I agree with a modification to create a portal for snowmobilers to travel and access those areas from the Duck Lake Trailhead. However, the closure boundary in the Selected Decision runs the ridge line from the south to Beaverdam Peak then drops approximately 1200 feet to the east and continues north, northeast just west of Lick Creek road for approximately 2 miles to the Duck Lake Trailhead parking area. Because this boundary line does not continue along the ridgeline to the north of Beaverdam Peak to Peak 8460', above Burnside Lake, and then following the natural geographic boundary of the drainage going east down to the Duck Lake Trailhead parking area, it leaves two bowls open to off-road snowmobiling.

As a frequent backcountry skier/user of the terrain area being addressed in this appeal I see several problems with the current boundary. The natural tendency of snowmobilers coming from McCall on Lick Creek road to Lick Creek Summit is going to be to access the area to the west of the summit directly from the summit. They will not continue on the road to the Duck Lake Trailhead and then travel back to the Southwest to get into these two bowls. Another words it appears to me to be an unenforceable boundary. No matter how off-road snowmobilers access these two bowls, legally or illegally, it will funnel all of them into this area. Also, Payette Powder Guides Yurts and adjacent ski terrain are oriented within line of

sight and sound of the terrain in question. Snowmobile usage in these areas creates a situation where there is no reasonable sense of solitude. By closing the 6895 acres to the south of Beaverdam Peak, and leaving this area to the west of Lick Creek summit open to off-road snowmobiling, you have in large part negated the goal of creating an easily accessed non-motorized backcountry ski area. The area of contention is easily accessed on foot from Lick Creek Summit/Payette Powder Guides Yurts. Being familiar with the terrain in question it appears to me that enforcement of this arbitrary boundary will be impossible. Although, on the map it may appear that the boundary line as it is now drawn is obvious, I will state that on the ground the terrain is very broken and there is no clearly defined terrain feature that could be for enforcement purposes.

In the preferred alternatives in the DEIS this closure line was not presented, and the public was not given a chance to review or comment. Furthermore, when making the decision the local snowmobile constituency was consulted. This information was taken into consideration to make the Selected Decision. Payette Powder Guides (the licensed Outfitter) and other backcountry users in the area were not given an opportunity to comment. I definitely agree that allowing snowmobile access via the Duck Lake Trailhead to the Lick Creek road corridor is reasonable, but this selected closure now allows off-road snowmobile use directly across from Payette Powder Guides Yurts. This will, in my opinion, positively lead to snowmobilers illegally accessing this area and creating hazards and conflict with backcountry skiers. The hazards I refer to are (as stated in the decision) from old snowmobile tracks not to mention the impact on non motorized users sense of solitude.

Moving the boundary of this closure north to Peak 8460', above Burnside Lake, and then following the drainage's natural geographic boundaries to the Duck Lake Trail Head ensures quality, safe recreation for non motorized backcountry users, and does not affect the desired snowmobile access to Duck Lake/Twenty Mile Trailhead or the Crestline trail, which was the purpose of modifying Alternative E to the current Selected Decision.

Lastly, in the initial time period since the decision was released, there were several maps within the ROD that had conflicting lines for the Lick Creek/Twenty Mile closure area. This demonstrates that there has been some confusion as to the specific closure boundary and this in and of itself warrants review of the decision in this area.

Gregg Lawley